



CONNECT

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Women's History

By: Terry Gish

The role of women in our society has changed greatly over the years. Career choices, opportunities for education, and even the right to vote have not always been given in the lives of female Americans. Through it all, though, the contributions of women have been essential in every aspect of this country's growth . Since 1987, March has been designated as a month to celebrate the achievements of women in our history. Although 31 days have been allocated to shining a light on these accomplishments, we seek to recognize inspiring women always.

DIVERSITY EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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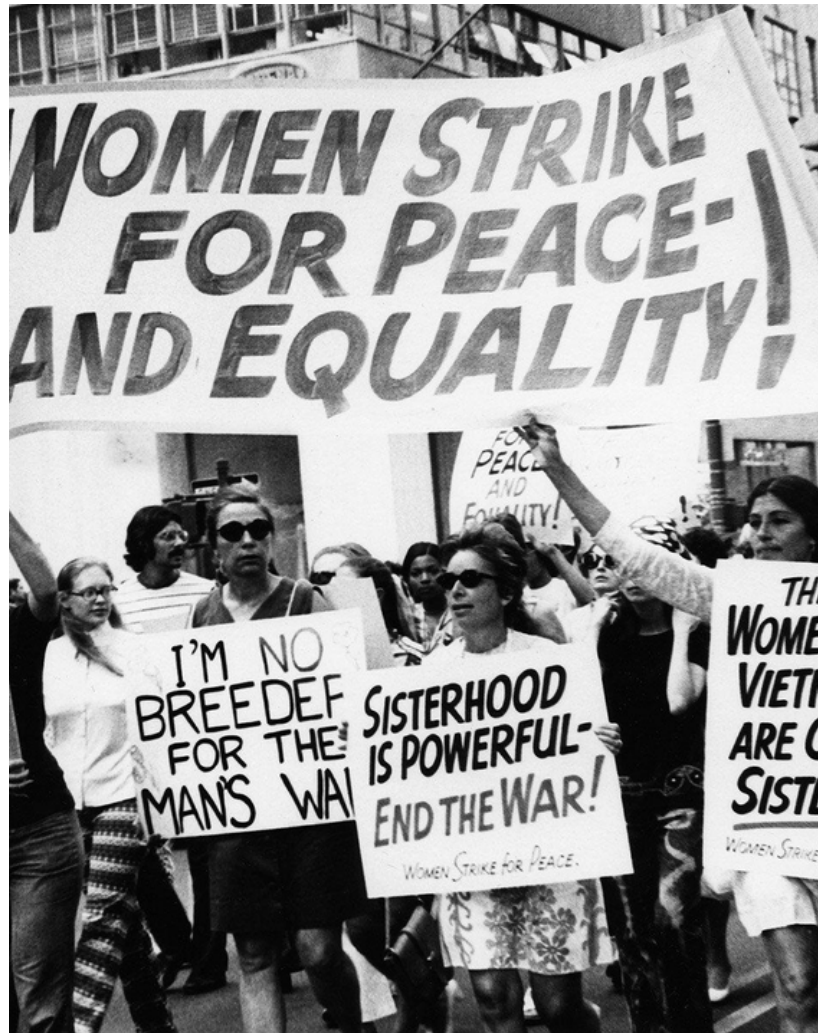
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WOMEN'S HISTORY DAY 1909

February 28, 1909 marked the first Woman's History Day in New York City. It commemorated the one-year anniversary of the garment workers' strikes when 15,000 women marched through lower Manhattan. From 1909 to 1910, immigrant women who worked in garment factories held a strike to protest their working conditions. Most of them were teen girls who worked 12-hour days. In one factory, Triangle Shirtwaist Company, employees were paid only \$15 a week. *History.com* describes it as a "true sweatshop." Young women worked in tight conditions at sewing machines, and the factories' owners didn't keep the factory up to safety standards. In 1911, the factory burned down and 145 workers were killed. It pushed lawmakers to finally pass legislation meant to protect factory workers.

FROM SUFFRAGETTE TO EVANSVILLE'S NEXT MAYOR: A STORY OF LOCAL WOMEN

BY: JENNIFER GREENLEE

This coming November, Evansville is going to be making history: we will elect our very first female mayor. Candidates Cheryl Musgrave, Natalie Rascher and Stephanie Terry are all vying to serve after Mayor Lloyd Winnecke has decided to not seek re-election after 11 years served. One hundred years ago, the idea of a woman stepping into this position would have been unheard of. Today, I'd like to discuss a little more in depth about the Hoosier women who paved the way for this reality.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, women and allies all across the country were writing, marching, lobbying, educating and participating in the suffragist movement. This was no different in southwestern Indiana, and a few key women were making sure that their voices were heard in a big way. Lucia Blount, whose name you may recognize from a marker on the National Votes for Women Trail in front of Central Library downtown, was one of those women. Blount, along with a few other eager and determined ladies, created the Evansville Equal Franchise League in 1886. Other notable women in this group include Bessie Lauenstein, Flora Fehn, Irene Erlbacher, Bertha Ehrich and Florita Eichel. Before a year's time of its conception, this Evansville chapter hosted a convention for the state league, where 400+ women flocked to hear keynote speaker Susan B. Anthony.

To further the interests of local women's suffragists, the Evansville Equal Franchise League created a training program to teach women how to grow the movement locally by organizing groups in small towns and farming communities. These women took classes on public speaking, organization skills, circulating petitions, and educated themselves on local, state and federal government structure. They raised money by donating old jewelry, lobbied Democrats and Republicans, and set up booths at county fairs.



After World War I started, women nationally were focusing solely on their war efforts. Local suffrage leaders, including Bessie Lauenstein, became leaders of the Liberty war bond sales. Women were leading the way and establishing themselves in places that had never been seen before: nineteen-year-old Pearl Chandley of Evansville was one of the first five women in history to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corp. Once the war was over, the women who had been fighting for the right to vote for decades by this point finally saw the fruits of their labor when Congress adopted the 19th Amendment on June 4, 1919.



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On January 16, 1920, Indiana became the 26th state to ratify the 19th Amendment, granting Hoosier women across the state the right to vote. The Evansville Equal Franchise League became the League of Women Voters, and the women who had taken classes and learned how to organize became some of the first to serve on the local school board, library board and parks board. Bessie Lauenstein continued to serve as a civic leader in the community, helping to establish the Boehne Camp Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Evansville Protestant Home, and the Evansville Association for the Blind, including its Lighthouse broom-making factory (a building which is still in operation today). Bertha Ehrich served on the Library Board and was chair of the planning committee for the new Central Public Library in 1932. Irene Erbacher continued her love of teaching and served on the school board from 1927-1932. Florita Eichel was passionate about the arts and served as curator of the Evansville Museum and established the Evansville Artists Guild. Flora Fehn was one of the first students of Evansville College, served as president of the League of Women Voters in 1922 and remained an active member until her death in 1967.

Today, women continue to serve their community in several different offices. Almost half of the current elected city and county officials in Evansville and Vanderburgh County are women. This shows that the efforts of the women who came before us have not been forgotten, and we are reaping the benefits of the seeds they planted many decades ago. As we reflect on Women's History Month this March, the D.E.E. Committee aims to celebrate the contributions that local women have made within our own community. We hope you will join us in recognizing the ladies who have paved the way for our future mayor.





WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

The 19th amendment didn't give *all* women the right to vote.

The 19th amendment, which granted women the right to vote, was signed into law on August 26, 1920. But at the time, a number of other laws prohibited Native American women, Black women, Asian American women, and Latinx women from voting, among others. It wasn't until 1924 that Native women born in the United States were granted citizenship, allowing them to vote, according to PBS.

It wasn't until 1965 that all women could legally vote. Even after 1924, Native women and other women of color were prevented from voting by state laws such as poll taxes and literacy tests. It wasn't until 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law, that discriminatory tactics such as literacy tests were outlawed, and all women could vote.



Inspiring Women

"This is my mentor Audrey and she has been my mentor for approximately 20 years (maybe more). She has an amazing relationship with God. She volunteers at Degege' Ministries doing bible study and praying for the homeless. I can't tell you the countless times she has helped me and encouraged me to go back to school and save money. She has been there for my children as well. She has only wanted to see me excel. Whenever I go back home to Grand Rapids, Michigan we always try to go out for lunch so that we can catch up with each other on what's going on in our lives.

She has never judged me, just prayed for me especially when I was in active addiction. God sent me an Angel and someone that I know who will always be in my corner no matter what and sees the best in me when at times I can't see the best in myself and for that I am grateful for her continuing to be a part of my life."-**Lateesa Johnson. Peer Support Specialist**

"A woman who inspires me is my aunt, Jackie. She is extremely insightful and helpful with anything that I have going on. She continues to make me a better person in life, even if we live many states away. Her motivation and drive are what help me get through difficult times in life but also her sense of humor makes light when the world seems dark. She has always been with me in major points of my life and is always there to talk to me on the phone in immediate situations. I am thankful to have someone like her in my life that continues to stay positive and make the best of things. I hope to live my life as full and lively as hers as I get older. Everyone deserves an Aunt Jackie!" -

Cameron Moore, Integrated Skills Coach

Inspiring Women

"The woman who inspires me most is my daughter Catherine "Catie" Taylor. Catie has been a force of nature since the day she was born. Catie is forward thinking and always ready to lend a hand to any project that will better her community and those in it.

She has worked at University of Evansville since graduating college and is currently Senior Associate Director of Admission. Catie's involvement in organizations include NACAC (National Association of Admission Counseling) as Affiliate Presidents Council Coordinator-Elect, INACAC (Indiana Association of College Admission Counseling) serving as president and conference chair, CIVSA Collegiate Information and Visitor Service Association, Leadership Everyone, GRANTED of Evansville serving as board President 2023/24 as well as co-chair for Over the Edge and several committees. Catie worked on Mickey's Kingdom as volunteer chair managing over 3,800 community volunteers. She has received Administrator of the Year at UE, Golden Heart Award for outstanding leadership and service in the community, Outstanding Service Award. More importantly, she is the best daughter anyone could ever have and a great person. She is caring and thoughtful. Catie loves to do things for people anonymously and does so often. She donates self, time and money to support those in need or just to make someone's day and is a staunch supporter of St. Jude. She has a positive attitude and always is looking for ways to better the world around her. She is always there for me and is my hero. I am blessed to have been chosen to be her mother, she is my best friend and I love her."

-Linda Taylor, Administrative Assistant

The People Who Made Evansville

BY: TYLER PLOGHER

In this series, we hope to highlight the lives and accomplishments of citizens who made notable contributions to the City of Evansville and surrounding communities and who, as members of marginalized groups, overcame adversity in doing so.



"Best Known and Most Loved"

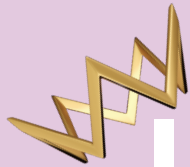
Albion Fellows Bacon, the woman who, today, is perhaps most associated with the domestic violence shelter founded in her name, believed that substandard, unsafe housing conditions were a root cause of the "social ills" that so concerned the broader public during her lifetime. As the wife of banker and merchant Hillary E. Bacon, she lived as a homemaker and writer until, almost by chance, she became exposed to and aware of the "evils" and suffering experienced by those living in some of the worst "riverfront slums" in Evansville. Albion felt moved to advocate for change and utilized the resources at her disposal, by virtue of her privilege, to serve as a "friendly visitor" to the charities already established in the community. She also established the Men's Circle of Friendly Visitors, the Flower Mission for poor working girls, a Working Girls' Association, an Anti-Tuberculosis League, and the Monday Night Club of influential citizens interested in charitable work.

Unsatisfied with the scope and influence of these organizations, Albion expanded her efforts in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century, becoming active in city planning and targeting the inadequate municipal building codes which perpetuated unsafe tenement conditions by allowing them to exist in the first place. When city leaders in Evansville resisted her efforts, she began lobbying the State of Indiana for change. She and the Monday Night Club drafted a model state law that would establish housing standards for all of Indiana. Although passage of initial legislation was secured in 1909, amendments were made excluding Evansville and Indianapolis from new standards. Albion attended every session of the Indiana General Assembly from 1909 to 1917, serving as an unpaid lobbyist until subsequent housing reform laws passed in 1913 and 1917 were secured and met the standards she and her fellow advocates felt were sufficient.

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Albion assisted in organizing the first Indiana Housing Association and, despite having achieved her primary goal, she continued to advocate for additional housing reforms, remained an activist for social welfare, and worked to improve the living conditions experienced by youth, specifically. Albion developed a reputation nationwide as an expert on housing reform and was appointed to the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership. In this capacity, she advised on the development of federal housing standards. After her death, newspapers paid homage to Albion as Evansville's "best known and most loved woman".





I AM HISTORY

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Boss

Changemaker

Courageous

Creative

Devoted

Doting

Doting

Empower

Innovative

Inspiring

Intelligent

Mother

Motivated

Persistent

Resourceful

Women

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